Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-25 (Canceled).

26. (Currently amended) A securing mechanism for securing a pair of free ends of a suture, comprising:

a first interlocking member having:

a base,

a protrusion extending from a periphery of the base,

a standing portion extending from the base adjacent to the protrusion, the protrusion being substantially smaller than the standing portion,

a mating window disposed through the base adjacent to the standing portion, and

a mating hole disposed through the base adjacent to the mating window, the mating hole being substantially smaller than the mating window; and

a second interlocking member operably connecting with the first interlocking member, the second interlocking member having:

at least one protrusion and at least one mating hole, and

a standing portion and a mating window;

wherein when the first and second interlocking members are operably connected with each other, the protrusions on the first interlocking member mate with the mating holes on the second interlocking members, the protrusions on the second interlocking member mate with the mating holes on the first interlocking members, the standing member on the first interlocking member mates with the mating window on the second interlocking member, and the standing member on the second interlocking member mates with the mating window on the first interlocking member, and

the standing portion of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member and the mating window of the other one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member being sized and configured to engage and confine the suture ends, with the suture ends positioned over the standing portion and in the mating window, when the standing portion and mating window are mated together.

27. (Previously presented)A securing mechanism of claim 26 wherein the standing portion of the first interlocking member has a free end away from an end fixed to the base of the first interlocking member, the free end having two substantially straight portions extending substantially perpendicular to the base of the first interlocking member with a substantially curved portion connecting the two generally straight portions together.

28. (Currently amended) A securing mechanism for securing a pair of free ends of a suture, comprising:

a first interlocking member having:

a base with a length, a width, a first half and a second half, the width being equal or smaller than the length,

a protrusion extending from the first half of the base,

a standing portion extending widthwise from the first half of the base adjacent to the protrusion,

a mating window disposed through the second half of the base adjacent to the standing portion and extending widthwise on the second half of the base, and

a mating hole disposed through the second half of the base adjacent to the mating window, the mating hole being substantially smaller than the mating window; and

a second interlocking member having:

a protrusion operably connecting with the mating hole of the first interlocking member,

a mating hole operably connecting with the ~~first~~ protrusion of the first interlocking member,

a standing portion operably connecting with the mating window of the first interlocking member, and

a mating window operably connecting with the standing portion of the first interlocking member;

the standing portion of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member and the mating window of the other one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member being sized and configured to engage and confine the suture ends, with the suture ends positioned over the standing portion and in the mating window, when the standing portion and mating window are mated together.

29. (Previously presented)The securing mechanism of claim 28 wherein the standing portion of the first interlocking member has a width and a length, the width being equal to or greater than the length and the length of the standing portion of the first interlocking member being less than the length of the base of the first interlocking member.

30. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 26, wherein the protrusions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member are cylindrical and are sized and configured to match opposing mating holes.

31. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 26, wherein the protrusions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member

further comprise barbs or have increased end diameters to engage opposing mating holes of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member in a fixed relationship when fully mated.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 26, wherein the first and second interlocking members may be advanced, retracted or adjusted along the length of the suture.

34. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 26, wherein the standing portions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member further comprise locking or latching features.

35. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 34, wherein the mating windows of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member further comprise receiving portions to mate with the locking features of the standing portions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member.

36. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 31, wherein the barbs or increased end diameters are in a non-contacting relationship with the suture.

37. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 34 wherein the locking or latching features of the standing portions are in a non-contacting relationship with the suture.

38. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of claim 26 wherein the standing portions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member are extendable through the mating window of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member and foldable onto an exterior surface of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member away from the suture.

39. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 28, wherein the protrusions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member are cylindrical and are sized and configured to match opposing mating holes.

40. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 28, wherein the protrusions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member further comprise barbs or have increased end diameters to engage opposing mating

holes of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member in a fixed relationship when fully mated.

41. (Canceled)

42. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 28, wherein the first and second interlocking members may be advanced, retracted or adjusted along the length of the suture.

43. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 28, wherein the standing portions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member further comprise locking or latching features.

44. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 43, wherein the mating windows of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member further comprise receiving portions to mate with the locking features of the standing portions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member.

45. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 40, wherein the barbs or increased end diameters are in a non-contacting relationship with the suture.

46. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of Claim 43 wherein the locking or latching features of the standing portions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member are in a non-contacting relationship with the suture.

47. (Previously presented) The securing mechanism of claim 28 wherein the standing portions of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member are extendable through the mating window of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member and foldable onto an exterior surface of one of the first interlocking member and the second interlocking member away from the suture.